

Austin American-Statesman

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AUSTIN360, D1
**WHY YOU CAN'T
FIND YOUR FAVORITE
HOLIDAY MOVIES ON
STREAMING SERVICES**



AUSTIN360, D1
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CROWDED**
We've got tips for enjoying a trip to
Enchanted Rock, a Hill Country gem

SPORTS, C1
**MCCARTY
LEADS TEXAS
WOMEN PAST
FLORIDA STATE**

AUSTIN SCHOOLS



In a demonstration in August at Crockett High School, school nurse Julie Carr (left) and nurse educator Cassie Moffitt show how the virtual clinic works. The video conference technology allows the medical staff and parents to confer with a sick or injured student. STEPHEN SPILLMAN / FOR AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Panel calls for nurses at every Austin school

Request to put AISD on
par with other districts
would cost millions.

By Melissa B. Taboada
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The Austin school district should place a licensed medical professional on every campus, according to new recommendations by a subcommittee tasked with examining school health services. The group, made up of health care experts, district staff and parents, pointed to various local and other urban Texas school districts

that offer school nurses at each of their schools, and said Austin should fund its school health program on par with comparable districts. "Austin ISD should not be the outlier," the recommendations state. But putting nurses on every district campus would cost the district millions more than it already spends on health services, making it unclear whether or how the district could pay for such a request. The district has an \$8.9 million health services budget, including \$7.1 million to the Seton Health-care Family for student health

services, which also includes mental health services. By comparison, the 86,000-student Fort Worth school district, which is close in size to the Austin district, has an \$11.6 million health services budget, which includes funding a full-time registered nurse at every campus, plus 21 health assistants spread through the district. Austin district administrators in January will update the school board on the recommendations. The district, under financial strain, eliminated nurses at every school more than 20

Nurses continued on A7

COURTS

Smoking pot while owning firearms kept Austin man in jail for 8 months

Obscure statute used
after charges related to
alleged threat tanked.

By Ryan Autullo
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Steven Boehle's probation required him to forfeit 13 guns, submit to drug testing. because of two habits he has. Steven Boehle shoots guns. He also smokes pot. The combination of the two is prohibited, according to a federal statute from 1993 that says it's illegal for users of a controlled

substance to own a firearm. The frequency with which a person must use a drug to be in violation is not clearly defined, and it has been the subject of litigation in the rare times the government has invoked the charge. After pleading guilty to the charge in September, Boehle, 50, was sentenced to five years of probation this month. By that point he had spent eight months in jail. The probation conditions

Guns continued on A9

CONTINUING COVERAGE WATER BILLS

Utility lashed over answers on water bills

Austin Energy offers no explanation, accepts no responsibility for spike.

By Elizabeth Findell
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Months after hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Austin residents received huge September water bills after abnormally low August bills, Austin's Electric Utility Commission flogged city staff members for answers. It didn't get many. "I am very, very concerned," said Commissioner Jim Boyle, who handed out copies of American-Statesman stories on the subject when the panel met this week. The Statesman evaluated 106 September water bills residents sent to the paper, all showing huge August dips in water use followed by unprecedented spikes, from clusters around Austin. Citywide, officials said more than 1,800 over-billing complaints were escalated for further action after that billing cycle – more than double a normal month. But Austin Energy, which han-

WHAT WE REPORTED
City Hall reporter Elizabeth Findell broke the story in October about a group of Circle C residents having abnormal spikes in their water bills. She followed up last month with an analysis of more than 100 water bills from customers across the city who had the same inexplicable jump in billing, raising new questions about why Austin Energy cannot account for charges that have added hundreds of dollars to some bills. dles meter reading and billing for the water utility, said it had no explanation for the dip and spike – and therefore wouldn't assume responsibility. Boyle and other commission members at the meeting Monday said they could think of no logical explanation for why so many people's water bills in August, typically one of the hottest and highest water use months of the year, would be lower than winter months, unless there was a meter reading or computer

Bills continued on A8

CONTINUING COVERAGE
HURRICANE HARVEY RECOVERY

State lacks process to track storm spending

No records are kept on
how billions of dollars
in federal aid are used.

Here's a look at where some of the money has gone and what's not being tracked:

Federal assistance
Texas has received more than \$11 billion in federal disaster aid since Harvey hit the Gulf Coast in late August. Gov. Greg Abbott has appealed for \$61 billion more in federal assistance, largely for public infrastructure projects. The bulk of the federal money spent so far has gone through federal agencies, which – unlike Texas agencies – maintain public, frequently updated databases of their spending. The Federal Emergency Management Agency also provides daily updates. Those records show that as of Dec. 12, FEMA had paid \$1.47 billion for hotel bills and emergency home repairs, the Small Business Administration had issued \$2.84 billion in low-interest loans to homeowners and businesses, Harvey continued on A6

PERSONAL FINANCE EXTRA
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DEBUNKED

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NATION & WORLD, A2
**Suicide bombers kill 8
at church in Pakistan**
At least 30 more are wounded in
church packed with worshippers.
Islamic State claims responsibility.

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Vol. 147 No. 146

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